

THE FOUR RULES

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The Four Rules

I ask Allah the Gracious, the Lord of the Great Throne to look after you in this world and in the Hereafter, and bless you wherever you may be. I also ask Him to make us of those who, when they are given are grateful, and when they are afflicted they endure patiently, and when they commit a sin, they beg for forgiveness. These qualities are the true means of happiness.

Be aware, may Allah accommodate you to his obedience, of the fact that hanifiyyeh, the religion of Ibrahim, is to worship Allah alone and to be sincere to Allah in religion. Allah says:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّا وَالْإِنْسَا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ﴾

"I have not created the jinn and the men but to worship Me."⁽¹⁾

(1) Surah # 51,56 Ibn Kathir interpreted this verse in his exegeses as: "I have created them only to command them to worship me, not because I need them".

(I say: There is no doubt that man has been created in a sound state of affairs to be fit for performing acts of worship, and prepared for it, because Allah has installed in men reason, and furnished them with senses, apparent and hidden, along with the other means of preparedness.)
[M.D]

And since you know that Allah has created you to worship Him, then you should realize that worship does not become genuine unless it is combined with the belief in the Oneness of Allah. Just as prayer is not valid without ablution.⁽¹⁾ Once shirk, or a polytheistic practice blemishes an act of worship, it nullifies it, just as impurity nullifies ablution.

﴿مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمَلُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ بِالْكُفْرِ
أُولَئِكَ حَبَطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ﴾

"It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to maintain the mosques of Allah while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. The works of such bear no fruit: in Fire shall they dwell."⁽²⁾

Once you realize that shirk pollutes acts of worship, and renders them void, and that a person who does so becomes one of those who shall go to Hell, you then realize that knowing this fact becomes one of your most important duties. May Allah save you from associating partners with Him. Allah says:

(1) (Or just as vinegar spoils honey when it is mixed with it, or when poison enters the body, against which we seek Allah's protection.)
[M.D]

(2) Surah # 9.17

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرِكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ﴾

"Allah does not forgive (the sin of) associating partners with Him, but forgives what is (short of) that to whomsoever He pleases.⁽¹⁾

Deliverance from Hell-Fire may be ensured by being aware of the four rules which Allah has mentioned in His Book.

The First Rule

The first rule is to know that the disbelievers, whom the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) fought, acknowledged Allah as is the sole Creator, the Provider and the One in Whose hand is the disposal of all affairs. Yet, the disbelievers were not considered Muslims. [That is to say, sheer acknowledgment of the Lordship of Allah was not enough to qualify them to be Muslims. They should have dedicated all acts of worship to Allah alone.] This is proven by Allah's words:

﴿فَقَلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَن يَخْرُجُ

(1) Surah # 4.116

الحيٰ من الْمَيْتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيْتَ مِنَ الْحَيٰ وَمَنْ يَدْبِرُ الْأُمْرَ فَسِيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ خَلَقَ أَفْلَاقَ
تَنَفُونَ ﴿١﴾

"Say, 'Who provides sustenance for you from the heaven and the earth? Or, Who is it that has power over the hearing and the seeing? Who brings forth the living from the dead, and brings the dead out of the living? Who governs all affairs?' They will say, 'Allah'. Then say, 'Will you not then fear (Him).'"⁽¹⁾

The Second Rule

The polytheists assert: "We did not call on them [the idols. We approach them only to seek nearness of Allah and intercession through them. [The proof that worshipping idols is polytheism]. is given in the following verse:

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أُولَاءِ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيَقْرِبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زَلْفَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحْكِمُ بِيْنَهُمْ فِيهِ مَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْدِي مِنْ هُوَ كاذِبٌ كَفَانَ ﴿٢﴾

"And those who take idols for dieties beside Him say, 'We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Allah. **Surely**, Allah will judge between

(1) Surah # 10.31

them on that in which they differ. Allah does not guide him who is a disbelieving liar."⁽¹⁾

And the proof of intercession, [that is, worshipping idols, beseeching them for relief and fulfilling needs, and taking them for intercessors with Allah is shirk,]. is provided in the following verse:

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضْرُهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هُؤُلَاءِ شُفَاعَاؤُنَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَنْبَئُنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سَبَّحَهُ وَتَعَالَى
عَمَّا يَشْرِكُونَ﴾

"And they worship beside Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them; and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah.' Say, 'Do you inform Allah of something He knows not in the heavens or in the earth. How far is Allah from that which they ascribe (as partners) to Him."⁽²⁾

Intercession is of two kinds; annulled and confirmed. The annulled intercession is that which is sought from other than Allah for needs that only Allah can fulfill. The proof of this is in the words of Allah:

(1) Surah # 39.3

(2) Surah # 10.18

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَفَقُوا مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا يَبْعِثُ فِيهِ وَلَا خَلَةٌ
وَلَا شَفاعةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

"O you who believe! Spend out of what We have supplied you before a day comes in which there shall be no tendering nor friendship nor intercession; and the disbelievers are the wrongdoers.⁽¹⁾

(1) Surah # 2.254 [Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathir said: "Allah commands His slaves to spend out of what He has provided them in His way, in charity, that they may accumulate their reward with their Lord and Proprietor. It is for this reason they should hasten to do so in this world, before a day comes -the Day of Resurrection- in which neither bargaining nor friendship nor intercession shall avail. No one can bail himself out, nor can he ransom himself, even if he spent, for that purpose, an earth load of gold. Nor can kinship avail him. for Allah says:

﴿فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَرْمَدُهُ وَلَا يَسْأَلُونَ﴾
"And when the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of relationship between them that day, nor will they ask after one another." (#23.101)

Nor the intercession of those who are entitled to intercede. And:

﴿وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾
"....and the disbelievers are the wrongdoers" is, grammatically speaking, a subject of a nominal clause which is incorporated in the predicate of the same clause to mean, there is no one who is more unjust or a worse wrongdoer than he who will come to Allah on that day as a disbeliever. Ata'b. Dinar was reported as saying: "Praise be to Allah Who says: 'The disbelievers are the wrongdoers' and did not say, 'the wrongdoers are the disbelievers. Allah knows best. i.e., no one would dare intercede with Allah without His leave because of Allah's greatness, magnificence and haughtiness. In the hadith of Intercession,

And the confirmed intercession is that which is sought from Allah. The intercessor of whom Allah approves of is the one who is honoured by the privilege to interceding while the one who is interceded for, is he whose utterances and actions are pleasing to Allah. Intercession for such a one is granted only with the leave of Allah. [Intercession is sought from Allah alone, because it is restricted to Him; whoever seeks it from other than Allah commits shirk, and he therefore defeats his own purpose, and renders himself bereft. Allah accepts only the pure belief in His Oneness, and permits intercession only for those who uphold monotheism as their creed. He says:

﴿مَن ذَا الَّذِي يُشْفَعُ عَنْهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ﴾

"Who is he that will intercede with Him except by

= the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "I proceed (on the Day of Judgment) and prostrate myself underneath the Throne. Allah keeps me on this posture as long as He wills, then it will be said, 'Raise your head and say; you will be listened to, intercede and your intercession will be accepted'. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) further said, 'Then I will be allowed to intercede for a certain number of people, and admit them to Jannah.] Allah knows best. The reason for Ata'b. Dinar's statement is the fact that every disbeliever is wrongdoer, but not every wrongdoer is a disbeliever. Some believers may wrong themselves by committing major or minor sins, but they would still be believers, and iman stays with them. Allah knows best. [M.M]

His permission."⁽¹⁾ And:

﴿وَلَا يُشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْضَى﴾

"And they intercede not except for him He approves."⁽²⁾ And:

﴿قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشُّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا﴾

"Say, 'All intercession rests with Allah...'"⁽³⁾

The Third Rule

The Prophet (peace be upon him) appeared among people who were divided in their religion. Some of them worshipped prophets and pious people, and some worshipped trees and stones, while others worshipped the sun and the moon. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) fought them all without making distinction between one group and another. This was in application of Allah's words:

﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ﴾

"And fight them until there is no infidelity, and re-

(1) Surah # 2.255

(2) Surah # 21.28

(3) Surah # 39.44

ligion is professed for Allah."⁽¹⁾

And (the evidence that worshipping) the sun and the moon [i.e. the proof that worshipping the sun and the moon and the rest of the stars and planets, and believing that they influence events of this world is shirk]. is revealed in Allah's words:

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ
وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقُوهُنَّ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيمَانَكُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ﴾

"And among His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not yourselves before the sun nor before the moon, but prostrate yourselves before Allah, Who created them, if it is He Whom you (really) worship."⁽²⁾

And about the angels, [i.e. the proof of the fact that worshipping angels is shirk] is produced in the following verse:

﴿وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَعْذِذُوا مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ أَرْبَابًا﴾

"And He does not command you to take angels and

(1) Surah # 8.39

(2) Surah # 41.37

Prophets for Lords."⁽¹⁾

And the proof of the Prophets [i.e. worshipping them and calling unto them is shirk]. is supplied in the following verse:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَىٰ بْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ قَلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأَمِي إِلَهًينَ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سَبِّحْنَاكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَا يُسْتَطِعُ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتَ قَلْتَهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلِمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنْكَ أَنْتَ عَلَامُ الْغَيْبِ﴾

"And when Allah (will) say to Issa (Jesus), 'O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say to people, 'Take me

(1) Surah # 3.80 Ibn Kathir elaborated in his exegeses on this verse: "Allah does not enjoin you to worship other than Allah, be he a commissioned Prophet or an angel who is close to Allah. Would Allah enjoin disbelief on you when you have submitted to Him? <<That is to say>>, no one does this except him who promotes worshipping other than Allah; and he who does so promotes disbelief. In the case of the Prophet, they preached the belief in the Oneness of Allah Who has no partners. Allah says:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾ الأَنْبِيَا - ٢٥
"We sent no Messenger before you but revealed to him there is no god but I, so worship Me." The word 'lords' in the verse means gods beside Allah. Allah knows best. imam al-Bukhari reported that Abdullah commented on the above verse saying: "Those were a group of jinn who had been worshipped, and then became Muslims." Abdullah b. Mas'ood elaborated: "This verse refers to a group of Arabs who used to worship jinn, but the latter embraced Islam while the former were not aware of that. Allah knows best].

nd my mother two gods beside Allah?' He (will) answer, 'Far removed are You (from what they ascribe to you), I could never say that to which I had no insight. If I had said it, You would have surely known. You know my insight, and I know not Your insight, Verily You are the Knower of the hidden things."⁽¹⁾ And the proof of the pious people; that is, worshipping them and calling them for help and relief, is shirk. Allah is far above what they ascribe to him,] is found in the following verse:

﴿أولئك الذين يدعون بيتغون إلى ربهم الوسيلة أقرب ويرجون رحمة
ويخالفون عذاباً إن عذاب ربك كان عذوراً﴾

"Those whom they call on themselves seek nearness to their Lord. Which of them is nearer; and they hope for His mercy, and fear His punishment. Surely, the torment of your Lord is a thing to be feared."⁽²⁾

And the proof of the trees and stones [i.e. seeking blessings through such objects as graves of pious people, sacrificing animals for fulfilling needs and

1) Surah # 5.116

2) Surah # 17.57

relief by touching cloth-coverings of the graves or its structures, are all condemned as shirk,]. is proven by Allah's words:

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الالٰتِ وَالْعَزِيزِ وَمِنَةَ النَّاثِلَةِ الْأُخْرَى﴾

"Have you considered al-Lat and al-Uzza. And Manat, the third, too. (the idols)?⁽¹⁾

(1) Surah # 53.19,20 [Allah the Exalted chides the pagans for worshipping idols and other objects of worship, and erecting temples for <<them resembling>> Ka'bah therewith which was built by Khalil ar-Rahman, or the friend of Allah, Ibrahim, peace be on him. Al-Lat was a white rock with designs on it. It was enclosed in a curtained house around which there was a court yard revered by the people of Ta'if, the tribe of Thaqeef and its allies, and they used to boast themselves in it against the other Arab tribes <<short of>> Quraish. While al-Uzza was a tree enclosed in a curtained structured, in a place called Nakhleh, between Makkah and Ta'if, upon which was a curtained structure with servants assigned to it. It was also revered by Quraish. Abu Sufyan, who was a pagan then said to the Muslims in the battle of Uhud: 'We have al-Uzza, but you have no Uzza'. The Messenger of Allah instructed his companions, 'Say, 'Allah is our Supporter, and you have no supporter'. Manat was found in a place called Mushallel by Qadid between Makkah and Madinah. It was revered by the tribes of Khuza'ah, al-Aws and al-Khzrej in al-Jahiliyyeh or the pre-Islamic era, and used to begin their hajj rituals by coming to it first. Then the Prophet sent some of his companions to demolish them. He sent Khalid b. al-Walid, 'The Drawn Sword of Allah' against the pagans, to demolish al-Uzza. He did so and said: "Uzza I disbelieve in you. No praise is owed to you. I have witnessed how Allah has disgraced you.

A proof of the above is also given in the following tradition: "Abu Waqid al-Laithi reported: "We went along with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) for the Battle of Hunain. We had but recently come out of our state of infidelityt into Islam. The pagans had then a lote tree called Dthat Anwat which they used to worship and tie their weapons onto. When we passed by it, we said: 'Messenger of Allah! Make dthat anwat for us like theirs'. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), said, 'Allahu akbar, these are as-sunnun.⁽¹⁾ "You, by the one in

= "The Messenger of Allah also sent al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah and Abu Sufyan to demolish al-Lat. They did so and built a mosque in its place, in Ta'if. And to Manat, the Messenger of Allah sent Abu Sufyan who demolished it. It is also said that it was Ali who demolished it. The Prophet peace be upon him came with the religion of truth, and sincere devotion to Allah, singling Allah out to be the sole worshipped God in truth, abolishing all the bad customs and every polytheistic practice which may mar the pure tenet of tawhid or monotheism. His great companions followed suit, and so did their followers till that time which was marked with chaos and confusion when the Satan and the deviant gained mastery over the minds of many Muslims, then idolatry was revived, particularly in our contemporary age, the age of compound ignorance and the decorative images. The predicament prevailed while the scholars keep silent, except those of them whom Allah wishes them to speak up. To Allah we all belong and to Him we shall return.] [M.D.]

(1) Practices and ways. [M.M]

Whose hand is my life, have just said what the Children of Israel said to Musa: 'Make for us a good just as they have gods'. He said, 'Surely; you are an ignorant people'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) went on to say, You shall follow the ways of those who were before you, that is the Jews and the Christians."⁽¹⁾

The Fourth Rule

The polytheists of today are worse than the polytheists of the early stage of Islam; for those who existed during the time of the Messenger of Allah, (peace be upon him) used to attribute partners to Allah at times of ease, but used to be sincere to Allah at times of difficulty. Whereas the polytheists of to-

(1) Al-Tirmidhi. [The companions who made the request to the Prophet had embraced Islam just recently. They thought that assigning a tree on which they could hang their weapons is a thing which might be pleasing to Allah. They only intended to seek Allah's pleasure by doing so. They were too loyal and noble to intend rebelling against the Prophet (peace be upon him), as the Children of Israel rebelled against Musa, peace be on him. The rest of the tradition is cited in along with the commentary in the Book of Tawheed which is a duty the slaves owe Allah. Refer to it, you will find in it what pleases you. And Allah knows best.]

day, attribute partners to Allah in both times of ease and difficulty. Allah refers to this saying:

﴿فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفَلَكِ دَعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لِهِ الدِّينِ، فَلَمَّا نَجَاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"And when they board a ship, they call on Allah, with sincere and exclusive faith in Him, but when He brings them back safe to land, behold! they associate partners to Him.⁽¹⁾

Therefore, we see many of those who worship pious people and graves of the shaikhs and masters, are sincere in calling them beside Allah and seeking help from them during both times of ease and hardships. Some of them become more sincere in their polytheism when they experience harder times. Contrary to the early pagans who used to attribute partners to Allah only at the times of ease, and used to address themselves with earnest supplication to Allah alone at times of distress. Today, pagans are persistent in their polytheistic ways, begging and beseeching the dead pious people. Alas! There is no strength nor power (to change the prevailing situa-

(1) Surah # 29.65

tion) but by the accommodation of Allah the High the Great.⁽¹⁾

Allah speaks the truth, and He is the One Who guides to the right direction. Allah, glory be to Him, says:

﴿فَلْ أَفْرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِي اللَّهُ بِضْرٍ هُنْ كَاشِفَاتُ ضَرَّهُ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحْمَةً هُنْ مُسْكَاتُ رَحْمَتِهِ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ﴾

"Say, 'What do you think if Allah wills to do me an injury, will those whom you call upon beside Allah be able to remove the injury inflicted by Him? Or, if He wills mercy for me, can they withhold His mercy?' Say, 'Allah is enough for Me. In Him trust those who would trust.'"⁽²⁾

and He says:

﴿أَمْ نَجِيبُ الْمُضطَرَ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْتُفُ السُّوءُ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خَلْقَاءَ الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

"Or, Who answers the distressed when he calls

(1) This invocation is called '*hawqaleh*', it is uttered <<at times>> of weakness and inability to change a bad situation. And Allah knows best. [M.M.]

(2) Surah # 39.38

upon Him, and removes the evil, and makes you successors in the earth? Is there a god beside Allah? Little is that you reflect."⁽¹⁾

And He says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يُمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قُطْمَرٍ. إِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَا سَمِعُوا مَا أَسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشَرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يَنْبُوْكُمْ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ﴾

"And those whom you call upon beside Allah own not even an integument of a date-stone. If you call on them, they will not hear your call, and even if they heard it, they could not answer you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will deny your having associated them with Allah. And none can inform you like the One Who is All-Aware."⁽²⁾

And He says:

﴿وَمَنْ أَضَلَّ مِنْ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ. وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا هُمُ الْأَدَاءُ وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ﴾

"And who is more astray than those who, instead of (praying unto) Allah, pray unto such as will not

(1) Surah # 27.62

(2) Surah # 35.13,14

answer them till the Day of Resurrection, and they are unconscious of their prayer? And when men are assembled, they will become enemies to them, and will deny their worship."⁽¹⁾

And Allah is the One Who guides to the straight path, and there is no power nor ability but through Allah.]

The end

(1) Surah # 46.5,6